



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
Commerce, Science, and Transportation

TED STEVENS, Chairman

DANIEL INOUYE, Co-Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Commerce Committee Approves Legislation to Address Threat of
Marine Debris**

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation today approved by voice vote the "Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act" (S. 362), introduced by Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) and co-sponsored by Senators Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), and Paul Sarbanes (D-Maryland).

The legislation approved today:

- Establishes a Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to reduce and prevent adverse impacts of marine debris on the marine environment and navigational safety.
- Establishes a NOAA marine debris grants program to encourage cooperative approaches to address marine debris problems.
- Directs the U.S. Coast Guard to improve its enforcement of existing laws to prevent ship-based pollution from plastics and other garbage.
- Reestablishes and strengthens the Interagency Committee on Marine Debris to reinvigorate marine debris research and activities among Federal agencies, in cooperation with non-governmental entities.
- Provides the tools to develop effective marine debris prevention and removal programs on a worldwide basis, including reporting and information requirements that will assist in the creation of an international marine debris database.
- Establishes funding levels for NOAA (\$10 million) and the Coast Guard (\$5 million) to carry out their programs in 2006 through 2010.

The Committee unanimously accepted a clarifying amendment by Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) that ensures technical feasibility and economic impact are considered in developing any new vessel record keeping requirements, which may affect small fishing vessels.

The legislation, which was considered and approved as S. 2488 by the full Senate last year, proceeds to the full Senate for its consideration.

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